

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 DODE-00 AID-10 IO-03 DPW-01

PRS-01 USIA-04 L-02 RSR-01 /074 W

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R 241105Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6397

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 15354

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PING, MILI, VS

SUBJECT: MR 2 SITREP, AUGUST 24

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL NHA TRANG AUG 24, 1973
REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L NHA TRANG 0793

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR 2 SITREP, AUGUST 24

1. SECURITY SITUATION: MILITARY ACTIVITY IN MR 2 OVER THE PAST
48 HOURS REMAINED AT A HIGH LEVEL. THIRTY-EIGHT INCIDENTS WERE
REPORTED: THEY WERE CONCENTRATED IN BINH DINH (13), PHU YEN
(12) AND KONTUM (11). MOST OF THEM WERE CARRIED AS ENEMY
ATTACKS BY FIRE, THOUGH THERE WERE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF
MINING INCIDENTS, INCLUDING ONE ON THE RAILROAD IN PHU YEN.
CASUALTIES DECREASED MARKEDLY ON THE ENEMY SIDE, AND REMAINED
ABOUT THE SAME FOR THE RVNAF: VC/NVA: 30 KIA, ONE CAPTURED;
RVNAF: 24 KIA, 53 WIA. RVNAF CAPTURED EIGHT INDIVIDUAL AND
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THREE CREW-SERVED ENEMY WEAPONS AND REPORTEDLY TWO INDIVIDUAL

WEAPONS LOST. AIR STRIKES REMAINED HEAVY, WITH 33 ON AUGUST 22 AND 36 ON AUGUST 23. ALL BUT TWO WERE IN BINH DINH.

2. THE CONSUL AT KONTUM REPORTS THAT GENERAL CAM, COMMANDER OF THE 23RD DIVISION, HAS INITIATED A NEW STRATEGY TO RETAKE TRUNG NGHIA AND POLEI KRONG. REALIZING THAT CONTINUED FRONTAL ASSUALTS ON TRUNG NGHIA ARE BLEEDING HIS TROOPS WITHOUT MAKING MUCH GAIN AGAINST THE WELL-ENTRENCHED ENEMY, HE NOW PLANS TO SUPPLEMENT THE FRIENDLY TOE-HOLD IN THE FRONT LINE TRENCHES EAST OF TRUNG NGHIA (WHICH WERE RETAKEN EARLIER THIS MONTH) BY ATTACKS ON THE TOWN FROM THE NORTH AND SOUTH. TO THIS END, THE 44TH REGT HAS ALREADY FOUGHT PAST THE K63 BATTALION OF THE ENEMY 95B REGT AND GAINED A POSITION ON THE RIVER BANK AT NGO THANH, ACROSS THE DAK BLA FROM TRUNG NGHIA. THEY HAVE YET TO TAKE THE LAST ENEMY STRONGPOINT AT PLEI DJO DRAP, ONE KILOMETER WEST OF NGO THANH, WHHICH WOULD GIVE THEM CONTROL OF THE BANK OPPOSITE TRUNG NGHIA AND A POSITION FROM WHICH TO SHELL OR ATTACK TRUNG NGHIA. MEANWHILE, THE 45TH REGT, FRONTING TRUNG NGHIA ON THE EAST, IS SENDING SAPPER SQUADS AGAINST ENEMY POSITIONS IN THE HILLS WHICH DOMINATE THE TOWN FROM THE NORTH. THESE HAVE STILLED MUCH OF THE ARTILLERY FIRE WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY BROKEN THE 45TH'S FRONTAL ASSUALTS ON THE TOWN. GVN TROOPS WILL NOW ATTEMPT TO MOVE FURTHER WEST TO THE NORTH OF TRUNG NGHIA AND ENCIRCLE THE TOWN.

3. CASUALTY REPORTING ON AUG 21 ATTACK BY ELEMENTS OF THE 95B REGT ON THE 2ND RANGER GROUP (REPORTED NHA TRANG 0785) IS A FURTHER ILLUSTRATION OF THE CAPRICIOUSNESS OF RVNAF STATISTICS. THE CONSUL IN KONTUM REPORTS THAT THE 23RD DIVISION MORNING BRIEFING ON AUG 22 REPORTED 17 RANGERS KIA, 33 WIA AND 92 ENEMY KIA. THE II CORPS CHIEF OF STAFF SAID THE SAME MORNING THAT 89 ENEMY HAD BEEN KILLED AND THAT THIS FIGURE WAS BASED ON BODY COUNT. LATER THAT DAY, THE RANGER'S OWN BRIEFING CLAIMED 49 ENEMY WERE KILLED. WE UNDERSTAND THE FIGURES OF 17 FRIENDLY AND 89 ENEMY KIA RECEIVED INTERNATIONAL PRESS DISSEMINATION.

4. COL LE HUU DUC (ACTING DEPUTY MR 2 COMMANDER) RECENTLY MENTIONED THAT COL NGUYEN VIET DAM, COMMANDER OF THE REGION'S RF/PF, WILL RETIRE ON SEPT 15, 1973, AND BE REPLACED BY COL VY VAN BINH.
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DUC CLEARLY FEELS DAM HAS BEEN AN INDIFFERENT LEADER. BINH, RELEASED THIS SPRING BY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, MAY BE AN IMPROVEMENT, BUT WE UNDERSTAND HE ASKED GEN TOAN, MR 2 COMMANDER, TO GIVE HIM THE JOB AS A NON-COM AT ASSIGNMENT SO THAT HE COULD RECUPERATE.

5. DUC ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN YESTERDAY THAT THE CONCENTRATION OF ENEMY ACTIVITY IN THE FOUR NORTHERN PROVINCES OF MR 2 HAD RESULTED IN RELAXED MILITARY VIGILANCE IN OTHER AREAS OF THE

REGION. HE MENTIONED THE PHAN RANG AIRBASE, THE CAM RANH HARBOR AND AMMUNITION DUMP, AND THE HILLS COMMANDING NHA TRANG AS ATTRACTIVE TARGETS WHICH THE ENEMY MIGHT STRIKE AND FIND POORLY DEFENDED. COLHEINH (CURRENTLY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR VITAL INSTALLATIONS) WAS ORDERED TO INSPECT THESE AREAS AT ONCE AND TAKE THE NECESSARY MEASURES FOR THEIR PROPER DEFENSE.

COOK

UNQUOTE:

MARTIN

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NNN

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